



From the Desk of Alyson Mack
Environmental Education & Outreach Specialist
Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge



Stewardship Saturday: Native Planting at Tubb's Spring

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Twelve volunteers, including high school students from Horizon Academy and members of the *Friends of Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex*, helped restore Tubb's Spring last Saturday morning. The area around the spring had been farmland prior to the Refuge's establishment in 1984. After years of lying fallow, it had become overgrown with non-native weeds, particularly Russian knapweed. These weeds provide little value to wildlife and have a tendency to outcompete native plants.

Crews from Ash Meadows NWR eradicated the weeds, but the resulting bare soil is highly susceptible to re-invasion by weeds. It is also susceptible to erosion by wind and flood events. Therefore, it became a Refuge priority to restore the site with native grasses and trees that would hold the soil in place and prevent other non-native weeds from reestablishing. The plants also provide food and shelter for native wildlife and help establish a bank of native seeds in the soil.

After an introduction to the project and a basic lesson in plant identification, volunteers got right to work. For four hours, the team busily transported, planted, and watered nearly 300 plants including saltgrass, bunchgrass, scratch grass, and the leatherleaf velvet ash trees that give Ash Meadows NWR its name. Altogether, volunteers donated 58 hours valued at an estimated \$1,239 (based on volunteer rate of \$21.36/hr; http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

Thanks to the Public Lands Institute for providing snacks, water, and assistance and to all the wonderful volunteers who worked to improve our public lands last weekend! □



Volunteers from Pahrump and Amargosa Valley unload nearly 300 native grasses and ash trees to plant around Tubb's Spring. The site was formerly overgrown with non-native weeds.



Volunteers plant and water a native saltgrass. In time, it will reestablish and provide beneficial ground cover for native wildlife in the area.